



## Preparedness News and Information

From FEMA's Preparedness Division

September 26, 2003

### NATIONAL NEWS

#### **Homeland Security Awards Grants to Localities for Communications Systems**

*GovExec, September 25, 2003*

The Homeland Security Department on Thursday announced it will make nearly \$80 million in grants available through FEMA to help communities to develop interoperable communications systems.

#### **Homeland Security Agency Leads Storm Preparations**

*Courier Post Online, September 19, 2003*

DHS took the lead role in storm response dispatching medical, environmental and rescue teams along the East Coast, conducting table-top scenarios to anticipate an array of storm-related problems and lining up depots of generators, water and other supplies for quick deployment well before Hurricane Isabel hit the coast last week.

- [Massive Homeland Security Response Ready to Meet Hurricane Victim Needs as Secretary Ridge Visits Impacted Areas](#), *DHS Press Release*, September 20

#### **Probe Finds Nuke Plant Security Concerns**

*NY Times, September 24, 2003*

Federal inspections and security exercises at commercial nuclear power plants often overstate the level of protection and reduce the likelihood of security improvements, according to congressional investigators.

- [Auditors Criticize Agency About Drills on Nuclear Security](#), *NY Times*, September 25

#### **Secret Service Evolves to Adapt to New Home**

*GovExec, September 24, 2003*

The challenge for the Secret Service in its new bureaucratic home will be applying its specialized expertise to the broad security of the homeland, without diluting the focus that has long given the agency its strength.

#### **GAO Finds Gap in Airport Screening**

*Associated Press, September 25, 2003*

The Transportation Security Administration isn't keeping close track of its airport security screeners' performance at finding weapons, according to a [report](#) by Congress's investigative arm.

- [Grants Awarded for Bomb Detection](#), *Federal Computer Week*, September 25
- [Controversial Anti-terror Tools Coming to Airports](#), *Times Record News*, September 25
- [TSA Screeners Lack Training, Supervision](#), *GovExec*, September 25

### **Data Sharing Deemed Critical to Tracking Terrorist Cash**

*GovExec, September 24, 2003*

A panel of federal officials on Wednesday told a House subcommittee that information sharing is critical to the reduction of funding to terrorists and said improvements have been made in the area since the terrorist attacks on the United States two years ago.

### **State Department Transfers List of Suspects**

*Washington Post, September 21, 2003*

In a decision that represents another reduction of the State Department's influence on counterterrorism policies, the CIA and FBI will soon take control of a database of suspected terrorists used to screen people seeking visas to enter the United States, according to government officials.

### **Tech Coordinators for Homeland Security Face Challenges**

*GovExec, September 23, 2003*

Integrating 22 agencies into the Homeland Security Department remains a challenge for project coordinators, but despite challenges Homeland Security is aiming to have one network pared down to a single infrastructure by December 2005.

## **CONGRESS**

### **House Lawmakers Seek to Curtail Anti-terrorism Law**

*GovExec, September 24, 2003*

Several high-profile surveillance provisions in the anti-terrorism law known as the USA PATRIOT Act would be modified under a bill that Democratic presidential candidate Dennis Kucinich of Ohio and Texas Republican Ron Paul pledged to introduce on Wednesday.

### **House Clears Defense, Homeland Security Funding**

*Reuters, September 24, 2003*

The homeland security funding bill, passed in the House by a vote of 417-8, would boost spending on U.S. domestic defenses against terrorism by around \$1 billion more than Bush requested, but many Democrats complained it would still leave gaps in areas ranging from port security to border protection.

- [Congress Passes DHS Spending](#), *Federal Computer Week*, September 25
- [Congress Funds Defense, Kills Terrorism Information Awareness](#), *GovExec*, September 25

### **House Panel calls for Financial Accountability at Homeland Security**

*GovExec, September 25, 2003*

A House Government Reform subcommittee on Wednesday passed legislation to institute financial accountability at the newly-established Department of Homeland Security.

## **RECENT LEGISLATION**

- **H.RES.374:** Waiving points of order against the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 2555) making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2004, and for other purposes, *House Rules Committee*, September 24
- **H.R.3158 :** To amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to establish a task force to determine essential capabilities for State and local jurisdictions to prevent, prepare for, and respond to acts of terrorism, to authorize the Secretary of Homeland Security to make grants to State and local governments to achieve such capability, and for other purposes, *House Select Homeland Security Committee*, September 24

## RECENT HEARINGS

- [Information Sharing and Coordination for Visa Issuance: Our First Line of Defense for Homeland Security](#), Senate Committee on the Judiciary, September 23
- [FEMA Activities after 9/11 and the Agency's Effectiveness within the Department of Homeland Security](#), Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, September 24
- [Examining Counterterror Initiatives in Terror Finance Programs](#), Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs, September 25

## STATE AND LOCAL ACTIVITIES

### [Homeland Security Teams Lead Hurricane Relief](#)

*Washington Times*, September 20, 2003

Emergency teams from the Homeland Security Department were dispatched with 70 semi-trailer trucks of supplies including portable toilets, plastic sheeting, cots and water to help victims of Hurricane Isabel along the East Coast.

### [Education in Homeland Security](#)

*Northwest Indiana Times*, September 20, 2003

Beecher High School suspended regular classes Friday to make way for a special student workshop on homeland security in which topics included response to fire emergencies, accidents, water safety, traffic concerns, hazardous materials rescue, protection of forest preserve lands and even airport security.

### [New Statewide Emergency Preparedness Program Unveiled](#)

*PR Newswire*, September 24, 2003

The Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC) in conjunction with local school board officials, state legislators and Prepared Response, Inc. announced a statewide public facilities mapping initiative designed to give police, fire and other first responders better information to use when responding to emergencies.

## **States Build Anti-terror Database**

*MSNBC, September 23, 2003*

While privacy worries are frustrating the Pentagon's plans for a far-reaching database to combat terrorism, a similar project is quietly taking shape with the participation of more than a dozen states — and \$12 million in federal funds.

## **Department of Homeland Security Awards \$74 Million for Emergency Operations Centers Grants**

*DHS Press Release, September 25, 2003*

The Department of Homeland Security announced today that almost \$74 million in funds is being made available to 19 states and territories in the form of grants for improvements to and construction of emergency operations centers (EOCs) around the country.

## **Yarmouth offers Emergency Preparedness Training**

*The Register, September 25, 2003*

The Yarmouth Fire and Rescue department will be starting a new CERT course at the beginning of October to prepare residents to help out in the event of an emergency and which will focus on managing utilities, fire safety, basic first aid, how to open airways, control bleeding and treat for shock, search and rescue, and organizing volunteers for effective action.

## **Chemical Weapons Disposal Briefing to be Held in Heflin**

*Cleburne News, September 25, 2003*

Cleburne County residents, one of six counties surrounding ANAD which make up the Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program area, will have an opportunity to find out how chemical weapons are being processed at the Anniston Chemical Agent Disposal Facility (ANCDF).

## **RELATED INFORMATION**

### **RECENT REPORTS**

- [Homeland Security: Information Sharing Responsibilities, Challenges, and Key Management Issues](#), House Select Committee on Homeland Security, September 2003
- [Chemical and Biological Defense: U.S. Ability to Meet Protective Suit Inventory Requirements Faces Risk](#), GAO-03-889C, September 2003
- [Disaster Assistance: Information on FEMA's Post-9/11 Public Assistance to the New York City Area](#), GAO-03-926, September 2003
- [Oversight of Security at Commercial Nuclear Power Plants Needs to Be Strengthened](#), GAO-03-752, September 2003
- [Emerging Infectious Diseases: Surveillance Capabilities of State and Local Agencies Need Improvement](#), GAO-03-1176T, September 2003
- [Airport Passenger Screening: Preliminary Observations on Progress Made and Challenges Remaining](#), GAO-03-1173, September 2003

The information contained in this newsletter was collected from Internet sources. Opinions expressed do not necessarily represent the official position of the Department of Homeland Security or FEMA's Preparedness Division.